

[re Battle of Britain]  
First Homecoming April 1959

CHARLOTTE AND DENIS PLIMMER

*go to Lambeth Palace for  
a talk with*



# THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

OF ALL the world's great titles, few are more august than that of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Therefore, when we were confronted by a stocky, cheerful priest whose high office was indicated only by a "V" of purple at his neck (no, no gaiters), we were somewhat jolted. Meeting His Grace was a little like stepping off a kerbstone you didn't know was there.

We found the Archbishop in the middle of his large panelled study whose bay windows overlook gardens, the Albert Embankment and a sierra of Parliamentary spires beyond. He was reading a letter.

"It's yours," he said, waving it at us. "I just wanted to see again what it was you were after."

He glanced through the remaining paragraphs quickly, then chuckled: "I see you want me to write a small volume of philosophy for you!"

The Primate is quick on his feet, shakes hands with warmth. He had recently had an operation, yet he had the bounce and buoyancy of a young man. He is almost seventy-two, and has his fair quota of wrinkles; they ripple about his face like the mountains and valleys of an animated relief-map. It is, one might say, the face of a character actor—expressive, mobile. His eyes have an elfin twinkle, his chuckle seems built-in.

After we left Lambeth Palace and compared notes, we agreed that we both had had to keep reminding ourselves of His Grace's stupendous position in the world. Talking with him, it was all too easy to forget that those quickly-gesturing hands had crowned a Queen, that that

ruddy, avuncular face had dominated thousands of Anglican worshippers on occasions of the most profound religious importance.

The Right Honourable and Most Reverend Geoffrey Francis Fisher, G.C.V.O., Royal Victorian Chain, D.D., ninety-ninth Archbishop of Canterbury, is the spiritual father of some forty million Anglicans in forty-six countries.

At his age, most men are content with dry-fly fishing, gentle rounds of golf and dandling grandchildren. His Grace has eight grandchildren, and he likes a good dandle as well as the next man. But chances are his grandchildren would have to make an appointment first.

He is one of the busiest men, septuagenarian or not, in the western world. He works seven days a week at his exacting job.

He is spiritual adviser to the Queen, supervises an Anglican missionary service that reaches into the globe's most remote corners, leads the Church Assembly and the Church Commissioners, is one of the three Principal Trustees of the British Museum and, on the Ecclesiastical Bench in the House of Lords, goads both Government and Opposition with firm impartiality.

He rises early in his six-room flat in Lambeth Palace, says his prayers, and by eight-thirty is breakfasting with Mrs Fisher. His working day starts at nine-fifteen with Matins said in his private chapel, one floor below his flat. He is joined by his Chaplain, a fresh-faced young priest called Michael Adie, and by any visiting ecclesiastics who may be staying in Lambeth Palace's hostel.

Nine-thirty finds (Continued on page 209)





# Seventeenth Summer

by Ann  
Nicholson

[Good Housekeeping April 1959]

It was a summer unlike any other she had known,  
for in it she learned for the first time of the agony and strength of love

I FIRST knew Michael when I was ten, and my parents bought a cottage in the small village on the Cornish coast where he lived. He was a thin, intense boy of twelve, who allowed me to tag along with him, as his devoted slave, until he became quite fond of me, in a vague and brotherly way.

Each June we arrived, my mother and I, leaving Father in London to join us in August. Michael and I picked up the threads of relationship as though we had never been apart, and swam and sailed and walked together, content in each other's company. Each September I was driven back to London, tearfully. I missed Michael terribly for a while, then settled down to the town life and school again, until it was June once more and we were able to meet again.

There was a change, of course, each summer. We were growing older, more mature. I could no longer hope to run as fast as Michael, or to swim as far. He became a young man, strong, kind, and rather serious; someone I could worship, and love.

It was during the summer of my seventeenth birthday that I was aware of him as a young man for the first time. I was almost shy in his presence when I saw how tall and broad-shouldered he had become in one year, and I was a little disconcerted to find that he seemed unaware that I, too, had grown up.

"Where are your pigtails?" he asked, shortly after we had arrived.

I was wearing my hair in a pony-tail, of which I was rather proud, and I was a little hurt to be reminded of the plaits.

"Don't you like my hair like this?"

Michael lifted the tail, and twisted it round his hand, laughing at me.

"I liked the pigtails," he said. "They were easier to pull."

We were walking along the sands, towards the rocks at the end of the beach, both of us in shorts, shirts and old sandals. Michael let go of my hair and grabbed my hand, pulling me along with

him, until we were racing wildly along the beach. The warm, salt wind blew in my face and the sand was firm beneath my feet. I was filled with a wild and sudden joy, a burst of happiness at being alive and being with Michael.

We reached the rocks, and Michael scrambled up, hauling me after him. Exhausted, I collapsed in a heap to recover my breath. Michael laughed at me, then sat down beside me.

"You don't run as fast as you used to," he said.

"I do," I gasped. "It's just that you run faster."

We sat still, while my breath came in quick pants, and Michael looked out at the sea. His head was thrown back, his hair stood on end with the wind and his hands were clasped loosely around his knees. For a long while he did not speak, but I was used to these silences and waited for him to break it.

Suddenly he said, out of the blue, "I'm accepted for Cambridge. Did I tell you?"

"Michael! How wonderful!"

He looked calm, but I could tell that he was pleased and proud.

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"I'm going to be a doctor. But don't tell anyone, Cathy. No one else knows."

I was happy, because I felt it to be right. Michael would be a wonderful doctor. I was pleased, too, that he had confided in me, and that I was the first person to know.

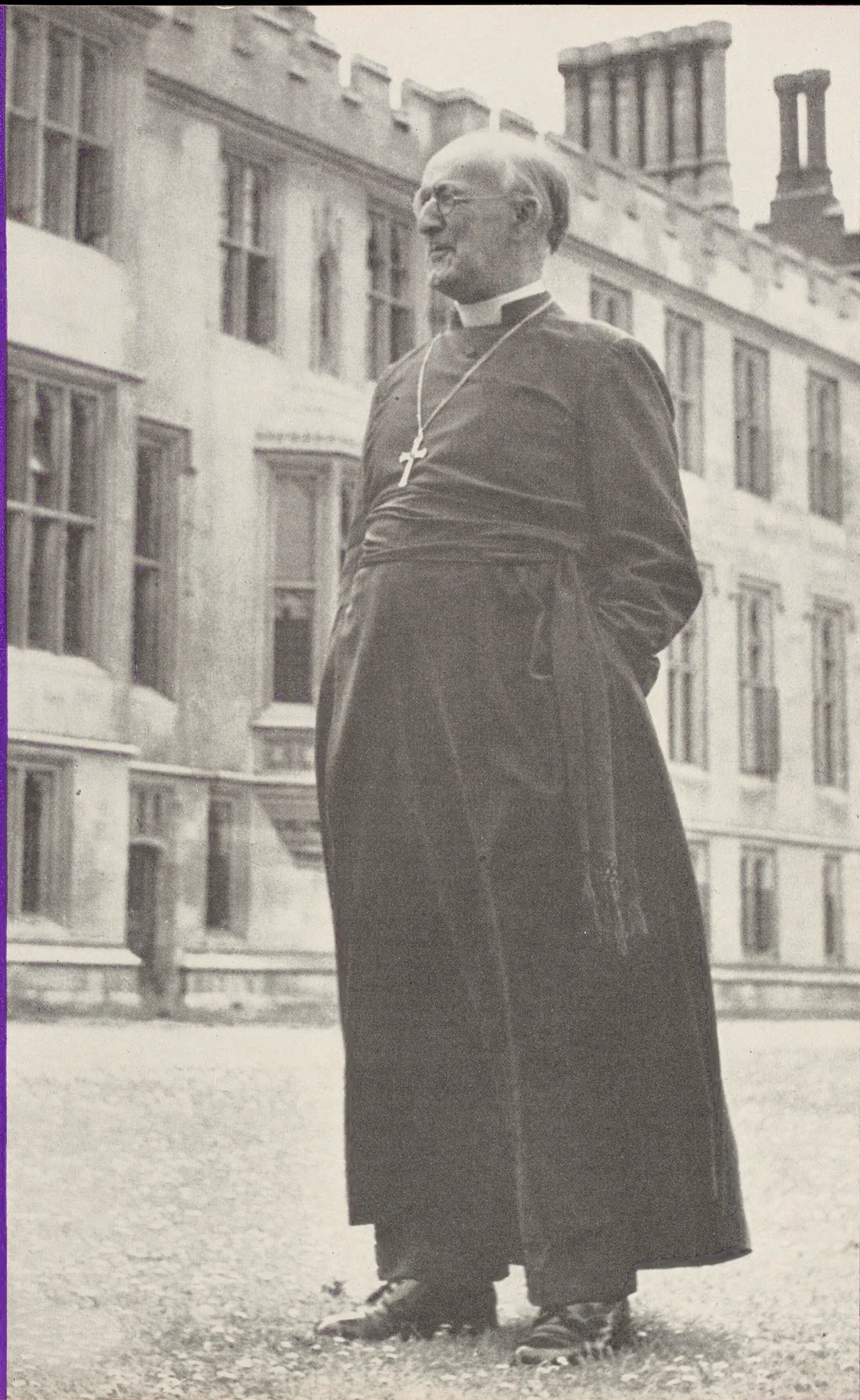
"It seems," Michael said, slowly, "one of the few things one can do and be proud of. Father will be a little upset that I don't want to go into his firm, of course. But I should hate it."

Michael's father, who was a widower, was managing director of a large firm in the nearest town. I knew him, and felt sure that he would not stand in Michael's way of being a doctor.

"Will you be a surgeon?" I asked. Already I could see him, his long hands in rubber gloves, his blue eyes above a mask.

Michael held out his hands and (Continued on page 137)











## THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

(Continued from page 70)

the two men busy in the Chaplain's office with the morning post. Letters range from bitter criticism of the Church (Dr Fisher often tries to see such critics personally) to a request for elucidation on some religious point from, say, an African bishop or a Welsh schoolboy.

The day gains momentum with a steady stream of callers—statesmen, priests, educators or simply people with something spiritually disturbing to get off their chests.

As often as not, His Grace leaves Lambeth Palace for engagements as disparate as administering Holy Communion to some of the Colonial Office staffs, and trading *quids* for *quos* with a group of Oxford students. He lunches with Mrs Fisher at the Palace when he doesn't have a business lunch.

In his own diocese of Canterbury, Dr Fisher's role is much nearer that of a parish priest than of a Prince of the Church.

His firm voice is heard not only in the magnificent Cathedral but in humble parish churches where he often preaches at the usual Sunday services. He advises parishioners personally, particularly those distressed by the religious implications of divorce.

Recently, when he was accused of spending too much time in the stratospheric atmosphere of The Establishment, the Bishop of Coventry sprang to his support:

"When I was a suffragan bishop in his diocese of Canterbury, I was constantly astonished by his humble, democratic approach—week after week he would come to little obscure villages for meetings and confirmations. He would be one of the last to leave, having spoken to every man, woman and child."

We've met few men in whom the gap between thought and speech is more swiftly leaped. Like a brisk and good-humoured travel courier, he conducted us on a guided tour of the archiepiscopal landscape, from the proper way to raise a child to the probable result of lunar landings.

Getting down to the problem we had posed to him—how people today can best resist the constricting influences of such mass-media as television, radio, cinema, newspapers, magazines and advertising—he said:

"If you want to know all about the threat to the mind of man, read a book called *Battle for the Mind*. It was written by a member of the staff of St Thomas's Hospital. It shows the technique of the pressures to break down mind-resistance."

He looked challengingly from one to the other of us.

"The Russians, during the worst period of their brainwashing, were engaged in the extreme form of what is happening to all of us through mass-media."

"In the old days, except perhaps for a small occasional news-sheet that village people saw, they exchanged information through conversation with their neighbours. One man's opinion was just as good as the next man's. What happens now, with the vast publicity powers, is that the individual is given opinions that are not his, but rather opinions that he is told he *ought* to have. This decreases the individual's judgement."

"If the mass-media were informational, it would be an admirable thing. Unfortunately, they're much too often propaganda. The problem of civilization is how to build up the power of discrimination and judgement."

"There are two means, but unfortunately they are both slow—education in all its forms (that includes education in the home) and religion."

... is, as everyone knows, a former schoolmaster. To him, the force that impinges on the human mind is a form of education, good or for ill. For this reason, he took a firm stand, Lords, against sponsored TV, feeling, as he told us, that it could not safely be dismissed as entertainment alone.

... the press too, he told us, can be a powerful form

... is a change of attitude among many editors. "Now, some of them are just commercial—they are in it for the circulation. It's as though a man has made and earned his living, not on the value of the number of people he attracted."

... popular press, he feels, are potentially so faced with the serious problem of how far to let them see them. But parents themselves, he said, are not. He thinks that in too many cases parents are the directors of cinemas, press, radio and TV, when

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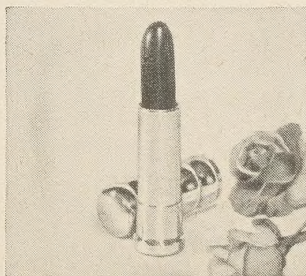
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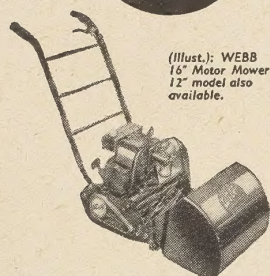
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it comes to teaching judgement and discrimination to young minds. "Some parents," he told us, "recognize their responsibilities. Others not only do not recognize them, but would have no idea of how to carry them out if they did."

We asked, "What do you suggest doing about such people?"

He shrugged: "What does religion do about sinners?"

He does not, however, shrug off the dilemma which, in his view, faces modern democracy. That dilemma, as he sees it, boils down to mass-produced minds casting indiscriminating ballots, and thus allowing their local and national affairs to get completely out of hand.

The Archbishop, plunging happily into the depths of political controversy, paced back and forth before his mantelpiece with its array of charmingly-carved ecclesiastical statuettes. He outlined to us his views on how a democracy should work.

"All the troubles of society begin," he said, "when society tries to rule out the natural independence and variety of mankind. Admittedly, man's individualism makes him a difficult creature. So society must contain him. And then there's a loss, both to the individual and to society."

"This is the constant struggle of mankind. We've had a theory that 'One man, one vote' was in itself a great thing. But it's no eternal truth. It's a cry of despair!"

"Why should a man with no judgement have as much say as a man with intelligence?"

He warmed to his theme:

"The 'One man, one vote' concept was valid when it delivered man from the tyranny of other men with too much power. It would be the greatest glory of democracy if it could now proclaim that this cry was obsolete."

He spoke with grave deliberation:

"At this point in civilization, we should be able to say that a citizen must show that he is able, fairly, to bear his responsibilities, that he is capable of the burden of thinking for himself."

"I think that voting through proved qualifications is a good idea."

We asked what, in that case, would be left of the Reform Bill of 1832 and subsequent legislation defining the citizen's rights of franchise.

"I would set my sights very low, very low indeed, but voters ought to prove that they have at least some sense of responsibility. A man has to know which is his right hand and which is his left, and have some idea of what his hands are for!"

If the Archbishop had his way, people released from gaol would be disenfranchised until they had again proved themselves to be useful members of society. He would also include literacy among the requirements for voting.

"There ought to be tests," he said, "like the tests you pass for a driving licence. You do not just put anybody in a car and let him go out and cause public damage. But an untested driver causes no more public damage than can a man with a vote."

The kind of public damage that His Grace means, it soon appeared, included racialism. On no subject during our entire talk with him was he more vehement than on fanatical colour prejudice.

"South Africa is saying that no matter how educated an African is, he cannot take his place in white society. This is a negation of Christian principle!"

We brought the problem closer to home by asking about the culpability of the mass-produced mind *vis-à-vis* the Notting Hill riots. The Archbishop exploded:

"If you live in a world in which everybody thinks that it is right to express antipathies in violent language, sooner or later some idiot will express them by violent action. I was not shocked by the race riots in Notting Hill. If anybody had asked me beforehand, I would have said, 'It is clear that they are going to happen!'"

To His Grace, such outbreaks are the tragic products of a society eroded by passions and propaganda that they have lost dependent and considered thought.

"A hundred years ago, we lived by a combination of science and religion together," he said. "They are the two great influences, and they are most effective when they are combined."

"But the clergyman today is much less important than he used to be, so he has less chance of being able to develop a sense of discrimination and responsibility."

The Archbishop discerns even in the modern world, for certain moral issues. It worries, for the theologians, he said, but not about educating the human beings as well.

He expatiated: "What we do in government and in education on non-moral grounds. Governments must be responsible for the moral implications of everything they do. Unfortunately—not until they get to something specific."